# The Alchemy of enjoyment by mono and brother hashim🤣💚

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# INTRODUCTION

KNOW, O beloved, that man was not created in jest or at random, but marvellously made and for some great end. Although he is not from everlasting, yet he lives for ever; and though his body is mean and earthly, yet his spirit is lofty and divine. When in the crucible of abstinence he is purged from carnal passions he attains to the highest, and in place of being a slave to lust and anger becomes endued with angelic qualities. Attaining that state, he finds his heaven in the contemplation of Eternal Beauty, and no longer in fleshly delights. The spiritual alchemy which operates this change in him, like that which transmutes base metals into gold, is not easily discovered, nor to be found in the house of every old woman. It is to explain that alchemy and its methods of operation that the author has

# CHAPTER I

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

KNOWLEDGE of self is the key to the knowledge of God, according to the saying: "He who knows himself knows God,"[1] and, as it is written in the Koran, "We will show them Our signs in the world and *in themselves*, that the truth may be manifest to them." Now nothing is nearer to thee than thyself, and if thou knowest not thyself how canst thou know anything else? If thou sayest "I know myself," meaning thy outward shape, body, face, limbs, and so forth, such knowledge can never be a key to the knowledge of God. Nor, if thy knowledge as to that which is within only extends so far, that when thou art hungry thou eatest, and when thou art angry thou attackest some one, wilt thou progress any further in this path, for the beasts are thy partners in this. But real self-knowledge consists in knowing the following things: What art thou in thyself, and from whence hast thou come? Whither

[1] Traditional saying of Muhammad.

art thou going, and for what purpose hast thou come to tarry here awhile, and in what does thy real happiness and misery consist? Some of thy attributes are those of animals, some of devils, and some of angels, and thou hast to find out which of these attributes are accidental and which essential. Till thou knowest this, thou canst not find out where thy real happiness lies. The occupation of animals is eating, sleeping, and fighting; therefore, if thou art an animal, busy thyself in these things. Devils are busy in stirring up mischief, and in guile and deceit; if thou belongest to them, do their work. Angels contemplate the beauty of God, and are entirely free from animal qualities; if thou art of angelic nature, then strive towards thine origin, that thou mayest know and contemplate the Most High, and be delivered from the thraldom of lust and anger. Thou shouldest also discover why thou hast been created with these two animal instincts: whether that they should subdue and lead thee captive, or whether that thou shouldest subdue them, and, in thy upward progress, make of one thy steed and of the other thy weapon.

The first step to self-knowledge is to know that thou art composed of an outward shape, called the body, and an inward entity called the heart, or soul. By "heart," I do not mean the piece of flesh situated in the left of our bodies,

but that which uses all the other faculties as its instruments and servants. In truth it does not belong to the visible world, but to the invisible, and has come into this world as a traveller visits a foreign country for the sake of merchandise, and will presently return to its native land. It is the knowledge of this entity and its attributes which is the key to the knowledge of God.

Some idea of the reality of the heart, or spirit, may be obtained by a man closing his eyes and forgetting everything around except his individuality. He will thus also obtain a glimpse of the unending nature of that individuality. Too close inquiry, however, into the essence of spirit is forbidden by the Law. In the Koran it is written: "They will question thee concerning the spirit. Say: 'The Spirit comes by the command of my Lord.'" Thus much is known of it that it is an indivisible essence belonging to the world of decrees, and that it is not from everlasting, but created. An exact philosophical knowledge of the spirit is not a necessary preliminary to walking in the path of religion, but comes rather as the result of self-discipline and perseverance in that path, as it is said in the Koran: "Those who strive in our way, verily we will guide them to the right paths."

For the carrying on of this spiritual warfare by which the knowledge of oneself and of God is to be obtained, the body may be figured as a

kingdom, the soul as its king, and the different senses and faculties as constituting an army. Reason may be called the vizier, or prime minister, passion the revenue-collector, and anger the police-officer. Under the guise of collecting revenue, passion is continually prone to plunder on its own account, while resentment is always inclined to harshness and extreme severity. Both of these, the revenue-collector and the police-officer, have to be kept in due subordination to the king, but not killed or expelled, as they have their own proper functions to fulfil. But if passion and resentment master reason, the ruin of the soul infallibly ensues. A soul which allows its lower faculties to dominate the higher is as one who should hand over an angel to the power of a dog or a Mussalman to the tyranny of an unbeliever. The cultivation of demonic, animal, or angelic qualities results in the production of corresponding characters, which in the Day of Judgment will be manifested in visible shapes, the sensual appearing as swine, the ferocious as dogs and wolves, and the pure as angels. The aim of moral discipline is to purify the heart from the rust of passion and resentment, till, like a clear mirror, it reflects the light of God.

Some one may here object, "But if man has been created with animal and demonic qualities as well as angelic, how are we to know that the latter constitute his real essence, while the former

# CHAPTER II

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

It is a well-known saying of the Prophet that "He who knows himself, knows God"; that is, by contemplation of his own being and attributes man arrives at some knowledge of God. But since many who contemplate themselves do not find God, it follows that there must be some special way of doing so. As a matter of fact, there are two methods of arriving at this knowledge, but one is so abstruse that it is not adapted to ordinary intelligences, and therefore is better left unexplained. The other method is as follows: When a man considers himself he knows that there was a time when he was non-existent, as it is written in the Koran: "Does it not occur to man that there was a time when he was nothing?" Further, he knows that he was made out of a drop of water in which there was neither intellect, nor hearing, sight, head, hands, feet, etc. From this it is obvious that, whatever degree of perfection he may have arrived at, he did not make himself, nor can he now make a single hair.

How much more helpless, then, was his condition when he was a mere drop of water! Thus, as we have seen in the first chapter, he finds in his own being reflected in miniature, so to speak, the power, wisdom, and love of the Creator. If all the sages of the world were assembled, and their lives prolonged for an indefinite time, they could not effect any improvement in the construction of a single part of the body.

For instance, in the adaptation of the front and side-teeth to the mastication of food, and in the construction of the tongue, salivating glands, and throat for its deglutition, we find a contrivance which cannot be improved upon. Similarly, whoever considers his hand, with its five fingers of unequal lengths, four of them with three joints and the thumb with only two, and the way in which it can be used for grasping, or for carrying, or for smiting, will frankly acknowledge that no amount of human wisdom could better it by altering the number and arrangement of the fingers, or in any other way.

When a man further considers how his various wants of food, lodging, etc., are amply supplied from the storehouse of creation, he becomes aware that God's mercy is as great as His power and wisdom, as He has Himself said, "My mercy is greater than My wrath," and according to the Prophet's saying, "God is more tender to His servants than a mother to her suckling-child."

## CHAPTER III

### THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS WORLD

This world is a stage or market-place passed by pilgrims on their way to the next. It is here that they are to provide themselves with provisions for the way; or, to put it plainly, man acquires here, by the use of his bodily senses, some knowledge of the works of God, and, through them, of God Himself, the sight of whom will constitute his future beatitude. It is for the acquirement of this knowledge that the spirit of man has descended into this world of water and clay. As long as his senses remain with him he is said to be "in this world"; when they depart, and only his essential attributes remain, he is said to have gone to "the next world."

While man is in this world, two things are necessary for him: first, the protection and nurture of his soul; secondly, the care and nurture of his body. The proper nourishment of the soul, as above shown, is the knowledge and love of God, and to be absorbed in the love of anything but

God is the ruin of the soul. The body, so to speak, is simply the riding-animal of the soul, and perishes while the soul endures. The soul should take care of the body, just as a pilgrim on his way to Mecca takes care of his camel; but if the pilgrim spends his whole time in feeding and adorning his camel, the caravan will leave him behind, and he will perish in the desert.

Man's bodily needs are simple, being comprised under three heads: food, clothing, and a dwelling-place; but the bodily desires which were implanted in him with a view to procuring these are apt to rebel against reason, which is of later growth than they. Accordingly, as we saw above, they require to be curbed and restrained by the divine laws promulgated by the prophets.

Considering the world with which we have for a time to do, we find it divided into three departments—animal, vegetable, and mineral. The products of all three are continually needed by man and have given rise to three principal occupations—those of the weaver, the builder, and the worker in metal. These, again, have many subordinate branches, such as tailors, masons, smiths, etc. None can be quite independent of others; this gives rise to various business-connections and relations, and these too frequently afford occasions for hatred, envy, jealousy, and other maladies of the soul. Hence

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEXT WORLD

As regards the joys of heaven and the pains of hell which will follow this life, all believers in the Koran and the Traditions are sufficiently informed. But it often escapes them that there is also a spiritual heaven and hell, concerning the former of which God said to His Prophet, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which are prepared for the righteous." In the heart of the enlightened man there is a window opening on the realities of the spiritual world, so that he knows, not by hearsay or traditional belief, but by actual experience, what produces wretchedness or happiness in the soul just as clearly and decidedly as the physician knows what produces sickness or health in the body. He recognises that knowledge of God and worship are medicinal, and that ignorance and sin are deadly poisons for the soul. Many even so-called "learned" men, from blindly following

commensurable with man, deny the possibility
man's really feeling love to God, and say that
can only love those of his own species. If he
*es* feel what he thinks is love to his Creator they
y it is a mere projection, or shadow cast by his
vn fantasy, or a reflection of love to the creature ;
usic and dancing, according to them, have only
do with creature love, and are therefore un-
wful as religious exercises. If we ask them
hat is the meaning of that "love to God"
hich is enjoined by the religious law, they reply
at it means obedience and worship. This is
error which we hope to confute in a later
apter dealing with the love of God. At present
content ourselves with saying that music and
ncing do not put into the heart what is not
ere already, but only fan into a flame dormant
notions. Therefore if a man has in his heart
at love to God which the Law enjoins it is
rfectly lawful, nay, laudable in him to take
rt in exercises which promote it. On the
her hand, if his heart is full of sensual desires,
usic and dancing will only increase them, and
e therefore unlawful for him. While, if he
tens to them merely as a matter of amusement,
ey are neither lawful nor unlawful, but in-
fferent. For the mere fact that they are
easant does not make them unlawful, any more
an the pleasure of listening to the singing of
rds or looking at green grass and running water

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